

Robertson Topp House
Memphis, Tennessee

HABS NO. 19-2

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
DISTRICT NO. 19

Historic American Buildings Survey
J. Frazer Smith, District Officer
36 So. Evergreen, Memphis, Tenn.

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ROBERTSON TOPP HOUSE
565 Beale Avenue
Memphis, Shelby County
Tennessee

Owner: Memphis Trades and Labor Council.

Date of Erection: 1841.

Architect: No record.

Builder: No record.

Present Condition: Good.

Number of Stories: Two.

Materials of Construction: Brick.

Other Existing Records: See text; see History of the Homes and
Gardens of Tennessee, p. 327, Garden Study Club of Nashville.

Additional Data: See following pages.

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ROBERTSON TOPP HOUSE
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HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL NOTES:

This old residence was designed and built by Robertson Topp in 1841. He was a distinguished lawyer, a builder of railroads and an outstanding citizen.¹ He had much to do with laying out the streets of Memphis as well as building the old Gayoso Hotel. He died in the old homestead in 1876.²

The house was occupied soon after 1876 by the Highbee School, and it was there that many of the southern planters from the neighboring states sent their daughters. Miss Eudora Topp, granddaughter of Robertson Topp, is living at the present time at 1591 Harbert Avenue, Memphis.²

The house is owned by the Memphis Trades and Labor Council, which purchased the place for \$50,000 in 1921. The caretaker, Mr. A.F. Foster, lives in the house.²

The exterior walls are of solid brick covered with lime plaster. Much of the plaster has fallen off, however, leaving exposed rough brickwork. The house is two storeys and basement high, and on the front is a colossal portico of the Corinthian type with pediment. Corinthian pilasters have been built on the sides of the house.

Inside the house are twenty rooms --small wonder that the house took three years for completion.¹ Behind the circular walnut stairway in the front hall are a series of brick additions, strung out one beyond the other.

The artists and architects who designed the house were from New Orleans.¹

¹History of the Homes and Gardens of Tennessee, p. 327, Garden Study Club of Nashville.

²Given by Marshall Smith, approved by J. Frazer Smith.
(Original sheet in field notebook.)

by *Henry Chandler Forman*
June 1936